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ABSTRACT

The third of four related manuals describing the goals and methods of an established developmental theatre project at the University of Colorado, this manual presents practical guidelines for producing a touring drama. With the audience as the focus in all of the suggested techniques and concepts, the manual discusses financing, casting, the rehearsal schedule, blocking, audience involvement and arrangement, music, properties, costumes, and diction. Stressing that one-sixth of the total rehearsal time should be spent in developing a working relationship among the performers, the manual concludes with suggestions for group dynamics. (MAI)

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Production Manual

by

Charles Wilcox

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The Colorado Caravan Workshop Manuals

Introduction

Developmental Theatre, as we conceive of it, involves the use of theatre for the purpose of facilitating personal and social development. The potential for such facilitation is limited by two major factors: the openness of people to what we have to offer and the nature of theatre itself. Even assuming an enthusiastic desire to take advantage of our offerings, we can make nc pretence to be all things to all people. There is some development that we can facilitate. Our experience--a mere four years now at the start of 1976--is limited. There is much exploration yet to be done, much yet to be learned. There is no need, however, for others to start now where we started four years ago. The intention of this series of manuals, therefore, is to describe our goals and our methods at this point of time.

The scope of each of the manuals is limited; it should, nonetheless, be of value. The value will be greater for those who do not turn to it for a definitive statement but for practical guidelines and a theoretical framework which can serve as the background for an experiment. To date, the experiment has been successful and fulfilling. We are no longer seeking to determine whether this concept of developmental theatre is viable. We are still seeking ways to increase and expand its utility. Our effort is developmental in that we are still learning, still trying out new ideas, still

capable of and quite willing to accept mistakes. Those who would like to join in this experiment--in doing what we know is effective but can be made more effective--will be off to a running start if they can benefit from what these manuals have to offer.

Colorado Caravan Production Methods

by

Charles Wilcox

From 1972 to 1976 the Colorado Caravan presented theatrical performances and workshops for schools and other institutions throughout the state of Colorado. The age range for their tours has been kindergarten through adults. This manual is an attempt to digest some of the ideas and methods for directing and rehearsing a group of actors in preparation for touring productions of a Caravan style.

There are no magic formulas or fail proof methods of directing any theatrical venture. Success depends so much upon the personalities involved and the results of stirring them together that each new effort is an entirely new adventure with the risks and rewards balanced precariously on many uncontrollable variables.

"A good production will be entertaining, it must not be less," is a slight misquote of a maxim about books by C.S. Lewis. All individuals involved in the preparation process should hold this goal as a watch word. The pleasure of the audience should be the primary concern of the actors and director alike. The audience centered touring production is the focus of techniques and concepts expressed in the following pages.

Economy

Necessity was indeed the mother of invention in the development of the style of Caravan productions. Six actors traveling in a station wagon, responsible for three-four hours of performance material and at least as much again in the way of workshops, could not be expected to have either time or energy enough to handle a large amount of costumes, scenery, and properties. But if necessity was the mother then art was the sire. The first elementary program produced by the Colorado Caravan (see The Magic Lantern in Scriptmaking) was chosen not only to fit the necessary criteria of time, budget, and space (40 minute time limit, six characters, no props or scenery, and appealing to ages K-6) but it also utilized highly stylized rhythms, vocal techniques, and precise movement found in classical Chinese and Japanese theatrical forms. Dialogue and spectacle were minimized and the use of imagination was maximized. This formula was so successful that it became the model for all Caravan productions. The elements of economy and simplicity were the abiding motifs whether or not the themes were Oriental.

The forty minute time limit is certainly one of the largest factors in this economical consideration. The theatrical cliche "Less is More" is borne out most clearly when a group attempts to pack too much in the way of technical tricks into so short a period. Better to make one or two theatrical points and make them clearly and well than to dazzle the audience by the wonder of it all. Generally children's scripts seem to attempt too much: too many effects, too many concepts, too much to see, hear, feel or remember. Often a desired effect in theatre can more readily and effectively be achieved by using a simpler choice than a busier one. Students of comic acting often fall into the trap of adding more frills to their act in order to get the

laughs or maintain them over a run, when what is required in most cases is a careful selection and honing of the material and effects already at hand. Thus, the Caravan style is opposed to the notion that children's plays must be fast paced and a laugh a minute in order to keep the children's attention. All the elements controlled by the actor are also in keeping with the spirit of economy; a gesture is reduced to its lowest common denominator, in an attempt to distill the essence of the moment, rather than to illustrate every thing. From the first moment the actors come into view the economy of movement and dialogue, the spareness of the texture of the production, captures and then frees the audience's imagination.

For all types of audiences the aim of this use of an economic style is to force them, gently but persuasively, to use their imaginations in a creative or even poetic way. Adult and High School audiences tend to bring expectations about what a theatrical performance ought to look like. The sparseness of costume, the lack of scenery and properties presented by this economic style can cause a moment of hesitation in such audiences and the actors must strive mightily to encourage a spirit of fun and participation. For everyone the goal is to participate in a production that is not "viewed" but "experienced". Merely holding the attention of 700 Junior High students for forty minutes, while an admirable achievement, is not enough. Their imaginations must be stimulated to generate images and ideas of their own; they must be asked to bring something of themselves into the production. Elaboration of the text tends only to give them more to view. Careful selection of effects can leave questions in the audience's mind or strike chords of memory and experience which will create a ripple effect. This experience makes the performance the property of the audience for it lives, after the fact, only in each member's specific memory. The special images he created for himself from the stimulation of the event are his.

Casting

At the heart of the effectiveness of a Caravan style touring theatre rests the selection of the performing members of the company. Apart from the criteria usually applied to actor selection (imagination, physical dexterity, well modulated voice; considerations of type and gender with regard to production needs) working as an actor/facilitator requires some special abilities. Close contact with audiences makes for an intimate environment which is uncomfortable for many proscenium trained actors. A deep and sincere respect for children, and the joys and the incredible struggles of growth and learning in which young people are engaged, is absolutely essential for every actor. In any given company the relative importance of actor training as a part of the concept of Developmental Theatre versus the need for highly skilled actors to offer the best possible developmental service to audiences must be considered. A compromise must be found between these very important needs which will not cause either goal to be shorted, resulting in excellence of performance by able actors who have acquired new skills while in contact with the Developmental Theatre program.

There are a number of experienced actors who readily admit the touring environment does not suit them. The demands of hours of travel and unusual performance times do not always call forth the best in everyone. Any young actor prone to rely on an established pattern or set of gimmicks to carry him through a longer run will be hard pressed by audiences keenly sensitive to a performance which has gone to sleep. Groups of children, for instance, may not be highly trained, formal critics but they will willingly visit their contempt on anything less than excellence by simply ignoring it and going about their own business. Strength of character is the only aptitude the actor can call upon equal to the challenge of these deserving audiences.

The traditional audition will not reveal some of these more spiritual characteristics in an actor. Some sort of individual interview of a relaxed and informal nature may be of some help by allowing the director a personal contact from which he can intuit something about the actor's strength of character and durability.

Rehearsal Schedule

Many student actors and directors lament that they never have enough time to rehearse. Except where special effort is made to extend rehearsal periods, the four weeks usual for educational theatre productions limited to a six to twelve performance run are often not enough. This condition is an inherent part of the learning environment, which assumes (in part) that a variety of theatrical experiences are necessary to broaden the background of the student actor.

The nature of a touring repertory of three or four programs and their accompanying workshops extended over a period of some one hundred fifty performances requires a rather different system for preparation. Time must be taken to prepare the company for the differences which will be encountered between the audiences for which each program is designed. Actors living together in such an intensive environment need time also to build an ensemble of enduring esprit.

With everything that must be accomplished in preparing a full tour of four 40 to 60 minute programs and accompanying workshops, a rehearsal period of four weeks or a total of 140 hours can still suffice. But the four weeks must be spent in absolute concentration on the job at hand. Divided equally by task this time will allow twenty plus hours for each script, for the workshops in general, and for a period devoted to physical discipline and company-building improvisation. This arrangement assumes that the actors have scripts and casting well in advance of the first rehearsal and are expected to be script free after the first blocking rehearsal.

The rule of thumb for most short run productions is to try to have the production peak just before opening night. This pacing keeps the pressure of exploration from adding to the pressure of opening night and

the tension inherent in a short run. The opposite tactic is more effective for a long touring engagement. Exploration and experimentation should be a continuing part of the actor's development and the development of the offerings of the tour. Two events will aid in this continued growth. First, several very early or preview performances should be arranged to establish clearly the atmosphere of openendedness. Next, a period of re-evaluation and re-rehearsal can be scheduled into the middle of the tour. This plan allows time free from the pressure of performance to seek answers for questions that tend of go unanswered while on the road.

An added help to the establishing of a fluid performing atmosphere is the use of a variety of rehearsal spaces during the preparation period. This tactic prepares the group for the touring condition of only rarely working in the same space for more than one performance. It also allows the director the opportunity to see his design from several points of view so that blocking and business which is not readily adaptable to the touring condition can be modified early in the rehearsal process.

Suggested Schedule - 40 minute production

1.	Individual discussions with actors about their parts and the show as a whole	1 hour each
2.	One or two read throughs	2-3 hours
3.	Blocking	4-6 hours
4.	Act or scene work (Please save cast time by calling only individuals and ensembles when all cast members are not involved in a scene)	10$\frac{1}{2}$ hours
5.	Previews	1-3 hours
6.	Follow up rehearsals	2-4 hours
		Total: 20-27 hours

Audience Design

One of the largest elements of a successful performance is the audience; how it perceives and appreciates what is presented to it. The director should do everything he can to control all the design aspects of the event which might influence the experience for the audience. The arrangement of the audience (seating) and the performance itself are large contributors to the total experience but the whole is also made up of other such variables as the time of day, announcements beforehand and who makes them, what is going on visually and auditorially while the audience is being seated and, generally, how attention is drawn to the performance.

A careful program of providing each audience with materials for study and preparation prior to each performance can be the single most useful method of shaping the audience expectations. This effort is especially successful in schools, prisons, hospitals and homes where the audience members have a predictable regular contact with each other and staff personnel. Many schools welcome the opportunity to integrate a performance/workshop visit into a study unit in Language Arts, Geography or some other related field.

The usual form of having the performance introduced by a student body flag ceremony, special announcements concerning bake sale results and schedule modifications, and finally warnings with regard to proper behavior during the performance can generate a huge amount of inertia on audience receptivity and response which, in many instances, will never be overcome. If institutional officials insist on such introductions the best course of action is to incorporate them into the design of the show. A way should be found to incorporate the standard procedure for a given type of institution into the production so the experience of the audience will be whole from start to finish. There can be a song, tableau, dance or pantomime improvised quickly by the actors and based on the elements just expressed in the introduction.

Artistically preferable to a formal introduction to the performance is a designed opening that catches the audiences' attentions on its own merit. The sound of a slowly accelerating tapping of a wood block opens One-Inch Fellow in a style remeniscent of the Kabuki theatre of Japan. Young people entering the playing space prior to a performance of Eskimo Life are met by actors playing and involving audience in Eskimo games such as string games, tops, juggling and bull roarer. As soon as the audience is seated the performers gradually begin various wrestling games with each other and this leads into the joke about the man who liked to win at wrestling. Each of these devices goes a long way towards transforming the playing space from a gymnasium in which the young people are used to running and screaming into a new place of wonder and magic.

Special attention should also be paid to the final moments of the performance and the audiences' egress from the space to classrooms or workshop areas. When the usual curtain call seems inappropriate or abrupt, some vocal or physical activity in which the audience may participate can signify the end of the performance and bring attention from the special reality generated by the actors to the immediate reality of the performance space. Here again announcements concerning the logistics of reorganizing the audience into workshop groups can be incorporated into the tone and mood established by the performance, with an eye toward making an artistic whole of the entire experience.

Blocking

While there are many approaches to blocking a few simple guides might be of use at this juncture.

A very useful tool for blocking is a prompt book with diagrams or pictographs opposite the text showing each change of position as it occurs in the show. This book can free the actors' and the director's memories while they are involved in other explorations such as timing, mood, and emphasis.

The important movement patterns should be decided upon and the audience arrangement and shape of the playing area should reflect those decisions. This is especially important in determining the number and position of the exits. For How Two Swallows Earned His Name four exits are required to allow for the four directions in the hoop of the world, but in Eskimo Life only one exit is needed to represent the typical entrance to an Innuit winter dwelling.

Positioning of the exits will provide a number of spaces where an actor working in the round can be placed so as not to block out any of the audience and delivery of important speeches or business. With four exits, for example, four dominant positions are available and an "X" pattern for strong crosses results, if the exits are opposite one another. With one exit a more circular pattern suggests itself, moving toward and away from the single dominant position.

In every theatrical situation the best plan is to have action followed by speech followed by action. This pattern allows the audience time to digest each unit of thought and helps keep clarity as an important element in the communication process. When working in the round this action-speech-action arrangment is even more important as an actor will usually have at least a portion of the audience to his back.

Grouping of actors should be arranged to provide emphasis. With the dominant actor for a given moment in a strong position the other actors can be grouped to give him a sense of tallness, aloneness or centered-ness, as is appropriate to the moment. When the movement is general and uncentered, a more outward moving mood may be served as is appropriate.

The director should be careful to change his viewing position throughout the rehearsal process but especially during blocking and criticising sessions. Thus he will avoid a one sided look to his design which will be visibly balanced only from one position in the audience. Most directors have done a good deal of acting and should spend some time watching the show from an actor's on or up stage point of view to allow his experience to observe and shape his choices.

Audience Involvement

An important part of the audience's experience can be the amount and the kind of involvement in which they participate in the production. The Colorado Caravan has experimented with audience involvement from one production (Two Swallows) with no actual physical contact or calling forth of audience response to other productions (The Generation Gap, Magic and the Supernatural) where audience members become not only scenery and sound effects but even characters. While all of these explorations were presented as theatrical performances, those which included audience participation to a large degree tended to become more characteristic of workshops in creative dramatics.

As the performance is designed and rehearsed the workshops which will grow out of each show should be kept in mind. In part the production exists only as a spring board for the workshops and should be modified whenever necessary to better serve that function.

The actors in the Colorado Caravan have often been referred to in official documents as actor/teachers. Perhaps a more accurate description of their job as it occurs would be actor/facilitator. In the performance portion of their offering they serve as actors in a theatrical piece and in the workshop portion they serve as facilitators. It is important that the two roles are kept distinct. In the performance excessive use of audience contact and involvement can throw the pace of the show off, especially if some particular group does not respond in a predictable fashion. This lessens the impact of the production as a tool for explorations in imagination in the workshop time to follow. On the other hand, an actor who is unable to stop performing and to serve as facilitator in the workshop cheats the audience by robbing them of the opportunity to explore themselves and the worlds of wonder opened up to them by a fine performance.

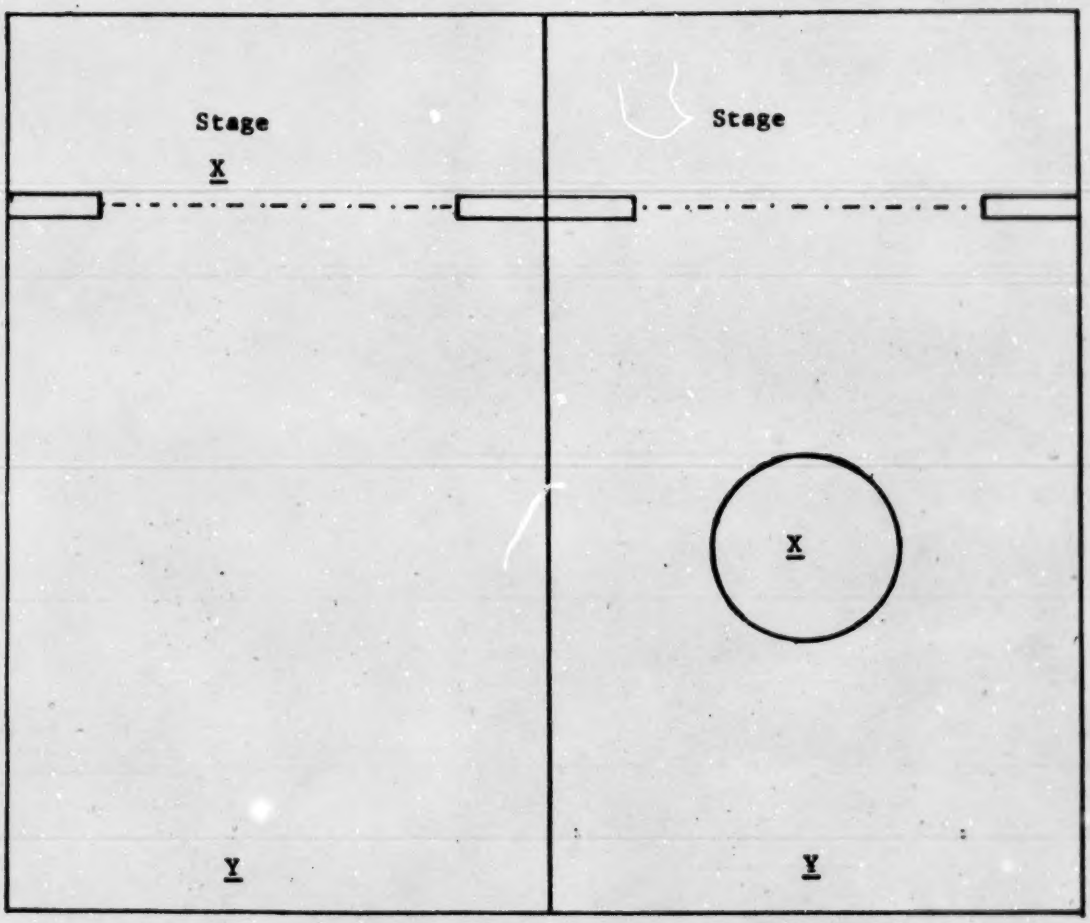
Audience Arrangement

Institutions rarely are equpped with stage facilities that approach what would be considered adequate for most college trained actors. This is due in part to the fact that University theatres in the country have managed to acquire equipment beyond the budgets of public secondary schools, elementary schools, prisons, even most Broadway productions. Auditoriums in schools, prisons and parks are generally designed to seat large numbers of people so they can view a speaker whose audibility is dependent upon the public address system. Performers working without amplification face a very difficult acoustical problem. In addition, audiences herded into such auditoriums usually have had quite boring experiences previously in the space and have no reason to expect anything but more of the same. Their attention is gone the moment they have difficulty hearing the performers. At best these auditoriums present an unreasonably difficult environment for audience and actor alike.

Most institutions have some sort of facility suitable for physical education in the form of a gymnasium or all-purpose room (often serving as a lunch room). Such gyms and other similarly shaped rooms have served as the most common performance area available to the Colorado Caravan . We ask for a space that will not preset an expectation of boredom in the audience, will allow for some flexibility in actor/audience relationship and will open up more possibilities for audience contact and involvement than in the typical auditorium.

In theory the possibilities for audience arrangement in the gym rectangle are infinite. In reality the circle in the rectangle or some variation of it seems to answer most of the criteria. To arrive at this choice the Colorado Caravan has tried a number of possibilities ranging from thrust, to tennis court, to theatre in the bagel. None of these provide the ideal sight lines of the Greco-Roman ampitheatre but they all do allow proximity vital to Caravan style theatre.

X = Actor
Y = furtheat audience member



Proscenium in a typical gymnasium

For the Round

A simple comparison will help to show why. From these floor plans one can see that in the usual space the distance from the furthest audience member to the playing area in the round is about one-half that of the stage set in thrust or proscenium position.

When One-Inch Fellow was staged in a rectangular space set in the center of the school gyms by definition the space was still generically in the round. The rectangle gave natural corners for actors to make square turns, a movement that does not look comfortable in circular spaces. Since a good deal of movement patterns were suggested by the Noh theatre of Japan the modification from circular to rectangular still allowed the effect of audience on all sides.

The choice of stage shape and audience arrangement should never be imposed on a given show. After the major movement patterns are designed and the movement motif developed and the entrance requirements determined, the geometry of the space should reflect those artistic choices. Operating on this principle the Colorado Caravan has designed all but one show in the round. Two Swallows reflected the Native American idea of the hoop of the world and aisles were set to the four directions. Eskimo Life takes place in the midst of sub-arctic winter and in a playing space representing an igloo shape with one aisle entrance.

Placement of aisle dictates certain movement possibilities and limitations for theatre in the round whether the audience is seated on the floor or on chairs. If aisles are put every quarter the actors can give stage easily by moving into aisle openings and remaining motionless. When using one aisle or no aisles the dominant actor must make a bold movement to take stage and separate himself from the rest of the group. Giving stage in this arrangement often consists of choosing a lower level such as kneeling,

sitting, squatting or lying down. This is true however many aisles have been established. Such movement may be inappropriate for certain productions such as Moliere's Imaginary Invalid, the adult audience play the Caravan is presently touring. With four aisles for the many comings and goings and chairs placed at the openings of the aisles there are enough places available to allow five to six actors to give stage fairly easily.

Performing in the round makes the seating of audiences in a gymnasium a fairly simple task since most gyms have basketball jump circles painted on them which can be used as a guide for seating. Sight lines can be improved for an elementary audience (most frequently the largest ones the group encounters) by seating the smaller youngsters in front of the taller ones. An illustration of this plan is available in the Management section, page 31 . Sending this diagram to the school prior to the visit by the performing company helps facilitate seating on that day and adds to the involvement of the school in the production in a small way.

In the process of rehearsing any given show to be performed in the round the director should make a conscious effort to view the show from many different physical points of view. This is especially true for a group which must rehearse in a limited space. If the actors have largely proscenium training and experience and the director always sits in one place, the action will soon be directed entirely in that direction. If this is discovered only when the show is brought into the larger space typical of the usual performance environment, much additional time will be necessary to re-orient the movement to the round.

Occasionally no other space than an auditorium is available for performance, or is large enough to contain the audience. Some schools have a ban against students in street clothes on the gym floor. Others feel that High School students should not be asked to sit on the floor or would be insulted if asked to do so. Every compromise should be explored before giving in to using the

auditorium. Some alternatives include offering to have the actors seat the students and making a game of removing shoes and arranging mini-skirted young ladies carefully; offering to supply labor for cleaning up after the performance (i.e., sweeping and mopping the gym floor; replacing tables and chairs in an alternate space); searching for an alternate space such as bandroom, lunchroom, wrestling gym, student lounge, large foyer, hall, library, shop, garage, out of doors.

There is a danger that such alternative spaces will include too many unwanted distractions. On one occasion the Caravan talked a High School principal into letting the students sit on the gym floor. In that school the students had never, ever been allowed to enter the playing area except in gym clothes. The atmosphere generated by the entire student body seated on the floor in street clothes was so overwhelming the actors were hard put to focus energy and concentration for the first third of the performance. Mistakes will be made and only a first hand evaluation of each individual situation can really serve to provide experience for making intelligent choices.

If the auditorium must be used there usually is some way to modify that use to increase audience contact. If the stage is large enough some or all of the students can be seated on it, or the large area between the front seats and the stage in some auditoriums can become the playing space. Explorations to change the space with an emphasis on improving the actor/audience relationship will help jar the pat expectation set which the audience brings with it to an auditorium.

Music

Because of its wonderful portability music is the one theatrical element which should accompany any and every Caravan style production. Popular music is experiencing a renaissance of folk and non-amplified instruments and it is a rare actor who cannot sing or play something. Music can set and change the mood, serve as transition, illustrate, divert attention or just be for fun or to show off. All this usually takes no more space in the touring vehicle than the already talented actor who is a member of the troupe.

Such traditional instruments as banjos, flutes, recorders, guitars, harmonicas, and dulcimers have all been used to good effect in former touring Caravans. Lesser known folk musical sounds have been found in the Kalimba (an African thumb piano), the mouth harp, and the concertina. Percussive instruments are especially portable and even unmusical actors (if such truly exist) can be taught to produce striking effects from bells, wood block, claves and tamborine. Special sounds conducive to an individual show have been achieved by constructing rerpoduction instruments indiginous to the peoples being represented by a script. Thus moraches and dance bells were used in Two Swallows and rawhide stretched over large quilting hoops were built as close copies to Innuit dance drums for Eskimo Life.

Another source for interesting music making devices is the junk yard. Wonderful sounds can be gotten from an old brake drum, car springs, pot lids, tin cans. Wind chimes from bits of scrap metal, blowing into short lengths of hose and whistles made from tubing are only a few of the ideas that can be explored for sounds of an unusual quality.

Properties

The problem of portability has a limiting effect on the audience and size of properties that are suitable for a Caravan style touring theatre. Choosing to use mime and pantomime to eliminate props altogether is logistically simple and artistically demanding. With actors sufficiently trained or with adequate training available the use of no props can be the most exciting possibility. Often young, proscenium bound actors, paradoxically freed by the limitations of mimic technique and a circular audience arrangement perform with imagination beyond their previous efforts. In the hands of experienced actors mime can be the most beautiful of theatrical artistic forms.

Should a number of hand, costume or set properties be deemed useful and necessary, rehearsal substitutes should be made available to the actors as early in rehearsals as possible. This will allow the actors time to explore each prop's potential. This early handling also gives the director time to examine each prop with an eye to lightening the touring load by eliminating props wherever possible.

The Colorado Caravan does not carry any technical personnel on the road and one way to insure an economic outlook on the part of all hands is to consider a prop in terms of its accumulated weight over the course of the tour. Thus a prop weighing one pound ends up weighing 200 lbs. if the actor using it is responsible for loading and unloading each time. The total tonnage involved in a heavily propped show, considered this way, should go a long distance towards establishing a conservative attitude.

An example from Caravan experience might serve for emphasis. The first year the Colorado Caravan toured with a wooden box on casters large enough to contain Sir John Falstaff in the buckbasket scene from Shakespeare's Merry Wives of Windsor. At that time the group toured with a large number of hand props for its first offering in the Junior High schools and the abiding function

of the buckbasket was as storage bin for those props. As the tour matured and more and more hand props were eliminated, the box was soon taking up more room than it was worth logistically. Artistically, the buckbasket was effective to illustrate Master Ford's frustration vented on the hapless Falstaff and later on the empty basket. But the actor playing Sir John, hidden in the basket, was also hidden from view. When the box was eliminated and the scene played with the servants carrying a pole to signify the basket and its contents, the actor's could invent many imaginative devices. This whole business became even more effective when the staging was revised to bring the performance closer to the audience. The close mimic exchanges of expression made possible by this proximity created a richness of shared experience between audience and performers not available when Falstaff was hidden. The participants were all involved in making joy together; the actors contributed skill, imagination and dexterity, and the audience brought a happy suspension of disbelief and a willingness to join in the resulting fun.

Costume

The principle for selecting a design or set of costume designs must also respond to the need for durability and portability. A nomadic theatre working out of a station wagon or van must be costumed economically enough so that actors will have room to carry personal gear on a long tour. At the same time the costumes must look good on stage fifteen minutes after being taken from their carrying space.

Within this limitation a wide variety of costuming possibilities are available. In fact, imaginative designers usually respond extremely well to narrowing sets of criteria. On one end of the scale the entire company could be dressed in a uniform costume for a given production. The Colorado Caravan has used this method in several ways: in One-Inch Fellow the actors were dressed in simplified hakama and leotards with variations in color for each player; the American Kaleidoscope was presented with actors simply costumed in lines to suggest early American styles (In this program American history was explored through documents ranging from Columbus' journal through William Bradford to the death of Abraham Lincoln with each actor realizing as many as twenty or more historical personnages); for Magic and the Supernatural each actor was given heavy weight tights and leotards dyed to his own favorite color, and to this basic costume was added permanent press (commercially made) trousers and straight skirts to be used as costume props when changing characters.

Another possibility the Caravan explored was using rehearsal clothes which had been selected during the rehearsals and were used and cared for as costumes during the run. Likewise some productions have been fully costumed relying heavily on the stock of costumes from the supporting theatre at the University of Colorado. Costumes borrowed from such costume stocks must be selected carefully for they usually were not constructed with the problems of care inherent in a touring situation in mind. Currently the Caravan is

relying on costumes constructed for it over the past years as a stock to be used at the actor's discretion (and director's approval) in the show or for the character of his choice. The theatre's stock is used as support for finding unusual items such as the Ass's nowl in Midsummer Night's Dream.

Other possibilities which have yet to be explored include having a large box of goodies to draw from, with each performance being slightly different from the preceding one; having the audience design the costumes for the production from perishable materials and a scenario sent to them in advance; having a company uniform which is used for all productions so that all his characters are dependent upon the actor's use of voice and body (collectively and individually). These few notions should suggest a host of others.

Shoes need to be carefully considered as the group often works on gymnasium floors. Some schools, prisons, etc. have rules governing the type of soles allowed on the floors of their facility and also rules against bare feet. Even those places which do not have rules regarding footwear will appreciate shoes that leave no marks from black rubber soles. Occasionally the group finds a space covered by carpet (usually outdoor style). Here soles that can be caught on the surface or that generate static electricity should be avoided. Jogging shoes or deck shoes make excellent choices for most situations. Slippers and dancers' techniques also can be useful, though they wear out quickly and are usually an occasion for comment by the more forward wags in the audience. This sort of reaction can be used as a prelude to audience involvement or should be avoided by wearing more conventional shoes as is appropriate to the tone of each production.

Modern wash and wear fabrics are a boon for touring theatres due to their durability, ease of care, wide range of color and style. Synthetics sometimes do have a low melting point and where acrobatic work and sliding on the floor is called for permanent pressed cotton may be a better choice.

Whatever costume principle is selected two artistic principles also apply. First it is important to consider what sort of tone the chosen costumes create. A suggestion of long body line can generate a feeling of the early medieval tines for a collection of scenes from the York cycle. Rehearsal clothes can help impart a spirit of ease and playfulness toward bringing the audience into the performance. Second, choice of color is critical, both to the actor's sense of wellbeing and to the audience's attraction to and aversion of them.

Costumes should lend themselves to workshop possibilities. If more elaborate outfitting is the choice then an entire workshop on costume design and execution might be offered for High school or adult audiences. If the performance is notable for its lack of distinctive costuming effects then this choice will lend itself to a discussion of the overall economy of style typifying the performance and the relative merits and usefulness of this style for productions the audience might construct.

Diction

The Colorado Caravan often works in cooperation with the language arts instructors in schools. Since developing language skills in students is a mutual concern to both groups attention must be paid to good language being a part of a Caravan offering. Generally regional dialects also serve as a distraction and need to be eliminated in favor of a standard American speech, except where character or textual requirements dictate otherwise. Pronunciation dictionaries are a source for the current standard in American usage.

Touring to spaces with a wide variety of extremely difficult accoustical problems demands time spent in rehearsal developing crystal clear articulation and flexible delivery rates, in order to allow for a variety of echo effects. There is a tendency for developing actors to stress unimportant words when working to develop gym-clear diction. Remember that good dialogue should sound like good conversation. The words of a speech can be rated as to importance: 1. nouns

2. verbs and adjectives
3. adverbs
4. others (relatively unimportant)

Have the actors render speeches into telegraph messages at $10.00 a word with a $100 maximum. This exercise will help make clear how few words need to be stressed in a speech to communicate it to the audience. Most filler words have an accented and an unaccented pronunciation. Generally the unaccented form should be used in conversational American English.

The Ensemble

As much as one sixth of the total rehearsal time should be spent on building a careful working relationship between the actors in a touring company. This is particularly true for young developing actors whose maturity may be in a state of flux, even though their flexibility and durability are their strongest asse Happily, many of the explorations used for company building are also useful as material for workshops and practice in their operation.

In this time of popular psychology all sorts of tools are becoming available to the layman which can be used in group dynamics. Transactional Analysis, Socio and Psycho drama and Gestalt are a few of the possibilities available to this new age of How-to-do-it books. Since a touring group needs to develop strong company consciousness, a framework for continued exploration and a free wheeling atmosphere for creative problem solving must be established. Any director with training and skill can use his abilities to good advantage. When a director feels unsure of his strengths as a lay psychologist, mistrusts the manuals as a ready source for help, or does not have good, outside help available, then he must turn to the discipline of his own craft for tools which will serve in most instances. About half of the available time should be spent in exercises. Flexibility, intelligibility and endurance are the assets most useful to actors performing in a wide variety of spaces which tend to be accoustically difficult. Physical and vocal endurance can be strengthened by careful but strenuous attention toward building these assets in the company. The director could even select exercises which seem to be most useful and use them to design a company warm-up to be used as a physical and vocal exploration of each performing space and as sensitization of the company members to each other in preparation for each performance. It is likely that the warmups for each show will require a different set of such exercises to best prepare actors for it. In Eskimo Life vocal plosives, especially

final consonants, need to be limbered up to give the show a flavor of Eskimo language. Power games which take advantage of the isolated individual, such as team tag and Red Rover can prepare the group for the atmosphere of manipulation in Shakespeare's Magic and the Supernatural. It is nearly impossible to perform without allowing time for these warmups and that time should be scheduled into the performance agenda.

Time is also well spent in exploring improvisations. Trust and dependency improvisations can be most helpful for company building. These can also be built into character and script exploring improvisations feeding into the development of the production. Improvisation time can also give the company a source of common experience from which materials for workshops can be drawn.

In all these explorations the director needs to carefully guide the focus of the work. The goal is the development of the ensemble, but the attention of the company should be outer directed to give it a creative and giving attitude throughout. At first the company should focus on the director and his task, then on the material or text being developed for presentation and finally on the audience. This outer directed thrust of a touring company can be a strong fundamental in creating and maintaining a happy experience for actors and audience alike.

There comes the touring group where no amount of work will bring cohesiveness. In this case the professional attitude of the actors must carry the work forward. We have toured one Caravan for a period of five months in which one actor would not speak to any Caravan person except the stage manager. His idiosyncracy was accepted by the group because in performance and in workshop he always gave the best of himself and that best never fell below the standards the Caravan calls forth. It is not the ideal situation, but it can be lived with as long as the standard of excellence is maintained.